

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NIAMEY 03762 231049Z

44

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02

OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 PC-01 /093 W

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R 231005Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1804

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NDJEMENA

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 3762

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: EMERGENCE OF A NATIONAL MOVEMENT SPONSORED BY KOUNTCHE

1. PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE SEEMS TO HAVE HIS EYE ON A PARA POLITICAL MOVEMENT, THUS FAR UNDEFINED, AIMED AT ABSORING EXCESS ENERGIES AND CHANNELING EFFORTS BEHIND GON'S DEVELOPMENT GOALS. KOUNTCHE FIRST REFERRED TO SUCH A MOVEMENT IN A SPEECH IN EARLY SEPTEMBER TO A CONFEDERATION OF NIAMEY WOMEN SAYING THAT WHAT HE HAD IN MIND WAS NOT A PARTY BUT AN ORGANIZATION DEVOTED TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL GOALS. SINCE THEN THE IDEA HAS BEEN GIVEN REGULAR AND "SPONTANEOUS" ENDORSEMENT IN THE PRESS. THE MOVEMENT'S FORMAL CREATION SEEMS JUST A MATTER OF TIME.

2. A MOVEMENT FATHERED BY KOUNTCHE IS LIKELY TO BE IN
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PAGE 02 NIAMEY 03762 231049Z

HIS IMAGE--UNDOCTRINAIRE, PRAGMATIC, AND
ORIENTATED TOWARD REALISTIC AND TANGIBLE GOALS.

AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, SUCH AN INITIATIVE
WOULD BE AN INTERESTING DEPARTURE FOR A REGIME
WHICH HAS GONE OUT OF ITS WAY TO SHUT THE
POLITICAL ARS SINCE THE APRIL 1974 COUP.

3. THE PRESIDENT SEEMS MOTIVATED BY SEVERAL
CONCERNS. WE BELIEVE HE IS DEEPLY AND SINCERELY
INTERESTED IN COMMUNICATING AT THE GRASS ROOTS LEVEL
AND FINDING WAYS OF MOBILIZING OPINION BEHIND HIS
PROGRAM OF HJD WORK AND AUSTERITY. OVER THE PAST
SEVERAL MONTHS THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN CARRYING THIS
MESSAGE DIRECTLY TO THE PEOPLE IN AN AMBITIOUS PROGRAM
OF TRAVEL, SPEECHES AND PALAVER. AS USEFUL AS SUCH
EFFORTS MAY BE, HOWEVER, KOUNTCHE PROBABLY BELIEVES
THAT THEY DISSIPATE HIS ENERGIES AND THAT SOME MORE
COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO MASS EDUCATION AND MOBILIZA-
TION IS REQUIRED. UP WE SAME TIME THERE IS GROWING
EVIDENCE THAT THE PRESIDENT CONFRONTS A KIND OF
POLITICAL ISOLATION. THERE IS AN INCREASING "VOICE
IN THE WILDERNESS" QUALITY IN SOME OF HIS RECENT
SPEECHES WHICH ARE MARKED BY AN EVER MORE DIDACTIC AND
FRUSTRATED TONE. AN INTROSPECTIVE, ALMOST BROODING
FIGURE, PRESIDENT SEEMS GENUINELY WORRIED ABOUT
WHETHER HIS MESSAGE IS REALLY GETTING ACROSS AND HOW
RHETORIC CAN BE TRANSLATED INTO ACTION. ADDING TO
PRESIDENT'S PROBLEM IS MARGINAL COMPETENCE OF MANY
OF HIS COLLEAGUES. NEITHER CIVIL SERVICE NOR OFFICER
COPRS OFFER MUOCO DEPTH OF ORGANIZATIONAL TALENT.
MOREOVER, EFFORTS TO WORK WITH STRUCTURES REMAINING
FROM DIORI REGIME, SUCH AS TRADE UNIONS HAVE LARGELY
FAILED AND PRESIDENT RECENTLY DISBANDED UNTN EXECUTIVE
BUREAU CALLING FOR FRESH ELECTIONS. FINALLY, PRESIDENT
DOUBTLESS CONCERNED ABOUT EVER PRESENT POSSIBILITY OF
ANTI-REGIME ACTIVITIES, A PROBLEM HEIGHTENED BY THE
EASE WITH WHICH SANI SIDO SEEMED TO OPERATE AMONG
NIGER'S POLITICALLY UNEMPLOYED. AGAINST THIS BACGROUNG,
PRESIDENT SEEMS TO SENSE ADVANTAGES OF BUILDING A NEW
INSTITUTION TO CHANNEL EXCESS ENERGIES WHILE HELPING
HIM RETAIN GROUPE ON THE HELM. HECK
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PAGE 03 NIAMEY 03762 231049Z

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